THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued a Notification on 7-7-2004 to bring new construction projects and new industrial estates with prescribed threshold levels within the purview of the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, 1994.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Central Government had received varied responses from the State Governments on the draft notification issued on 27th October, 2003. While some of the States had supported the notification, a few made suggestions for delegation of powers to them for the Environmental Impact. Assessment of these projects. A few States, however, had objected to the issuance of the notification and sought its withdrawal.

Conversion of Forest Villages into Revenue Villages

1841. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that villages in several areas are categorised as 'Forest Villages' and some as 'Revenue Villages' in the country;

(b) the criteria and rules followed, if any, in such categorisation and conversion of forest villages into revenue villages and *vice-versa;*

(c) the material impact envisaged on the habitants of such villages consequent to conversions;

(d) the details of forest villages as on 31st March, 2004 in the country, State-wise; and

(e) the number of forest villages converted, if any, into revenue villages in Jharkhand region since independence, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The forest villages were set up, in various States, in remote and inaccessible forest areas with a view to providing uninterrupted manpower for forestry operations. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued guidelines dated 18.9.1990 for conversion of such forest villages into revenue villages. Such conversion requires de-notification of the

concerned forest land. Proposal for conversion of forest villages into revenue villages is required to be submitted by the State/UT Governments for approval of Central Government. There is no provision for conversion of revenue villages into forest villages.

(c) On conversion of forest villages into revenue villages, the villagers are conferred heritable but inalienable rights over the land.

(d) As per the information furnished by various State/UT Governments, there are 2690 forest villages in 19 States/UTs. The State-wise number of these forest villages is given in the Statement, *(see below)*

(e) No forest village has been converted into revenue village in Jharkhand, so far.

Statement

State-wise number of forest villages in the country

SI.No.	Name of State	Number of Forest Villages
1	Assam	499
2	Bihar	0
3	Chhattisgarh	421
4	Daman & Diu	0
5	Gujarat	194
6	Haryana	0
7	Himachal Pradesh	0
8	Jharkhand	24
9	Lakshdweep	0
10	Maharashtra	73
11	Meghalaya	22
12	Madhya Pradesh	925
13	Mizoram	85
14	Orissa	20
15	Punjab	0
16	Tripura	96
17	Uttaranchal	142
18	Uttar Pradesh	19
19	West Bengal	170
	TOTAL:	2690